

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## The Power of Young Life

The gnarled, old tree, declining from year to year toward the end of its long career, is interesting for what it has been. Its long life of fruitage has been a blessing to the world. Among its branches the songsters of the sky have discoursed the spontaneous melody of nature. Beneath its grateful shade the toilers have found repose and relief in the heat of the day. From its foliage glad hands have plucked the golden tribute which bounteous nature thus yields in her most gracious and liberal mood. The old tree is revered for what it has been, and praised for what it yet can do in its patriarchal decline.

The broad, spreading, vigorous, mighty tree yet glorying in its middle-age prime, pouring down great harvests into the lap of need, feeding the world's millions, laying up its beautiful and bountiful store for the winter day, when in the long twilight and evening the families of a nation gather around the cheerful hearth, tossing from one to another the fragrant spheres that have ripened in the autumn sun, hanging between the earth and the sky as if they were part celestial and not all of the gross earth,—this great, patient, tireless tree has always been the friend of man and the ornament of the world ever since the Lord God planted the Eden with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food."

But it is the young tree just blossoming into the promise of a long life of fruit bearing, having yet before it the lengthened career of usefulness and beneficence,—it is the tree with yet the sap of its youth rushing up from the deep rooted soil into the ambitious branches, spreading out to the sunrise and reaching up to the sky, that is yet the most interesting and inspiring vision in all the landscape of the Lord's planting. It is beautiful for what it is to be, no less than for what it is. There is double reason for our cherishing it. The guaranty of a generation dwells among its branches. The hope of the race and of the world lies there. Alas for it and for the world when a hidden canker gnaws at the root, and all of its bright promise is withered in the tender leaf and in the fading blossom. Alas! Alas! for it is the tragedy of the world, when the fountains of its life are poisoned, and only sodom apples grow upon the blighted branches.

Shall we fail to read aright this humble allegory? Our young men and our young women are the hope of the family, the hope of the church, the hope of the world. When this hope is blighted, there is no other evil like unto this. The most pathetic, the most sorrowful sight in the world is the all too familiar spectacle of bright young men and young women gliding into paths of self indulgence, falling in love with forms of pleasure and sin that lead only into yet more evil courses, poisoning all the pure fountains of the life, clouding the intellect, soiling the heart, staining the soul, draining dry every source of power. There would be mourning in many a family and in many a church if we could see what God and his angels see daily. Oh, pastors and parents, if ye have not utterly failed to learn wisdom in the passing years, watch for the inexperienced feet of the young, and warn them against the evils of which so many of them know nothing until they awake ruined. Evils, vices, gross habits of body and mind that lurk in secret, warn them as you would shield your best loved ones from a crouching tiger or a lurking serpent. The blighting sins of youth are more often than otherwise the sins of ignorance, but none the less do they carry the poison of death. A diseased body, a withered mind, long years of perhaps pain and sorrow and defeat, is the dreadful penalty that righteousness exacts of transgression. From this prison they do not emerge until they have paid the uttermost farthing, and then it is too late to redeem the lost years. Weary of the world, and sorrowful, and defeated, they look only for rest in the slumber of the grave. Oh, the infinite pity of it all.

Let not the pure, godly young man or young woman think that they are responsible for but a small influence in the world. There are none so mighty as they. The Christ was not an old man, nor yet a middle-aged man, but a young man. He chose the age of most potent influence. Son of the morning, there rested upon him the dew of immortal youth. The levers of the world are in the hands of the honest, strong, aspiring, enthusiastic, ambitious youth of the land. They bear the keys of the new morning, and thus we are comforted who descend from the noon of labor to the evening rest.